

The Big Business of Lecturing

By Phil Casey

Talk is not cheap, and there are mouths to prove it up at the Sheraton-Park Hotel.

For there, the International Platform Association (IPA) is completing its five-day convention. About 1,500 of the 12,000 IPA members are attending the 69th annual convention of the trade organization of speakers, lecture bureau managers and booking agents.

Talkers like columnist Art Buchwald and cartoonist Al Capp earn as much as \$3,000 and more for their lectures, and many speakers, people prominent in other fields,

are paid more than \$2,000, the IPA says.

Talk is big business, and getting bigger, says Dan Tyler Moore, director general of the IPA. The audience for three-dimensional speakers has grown to the hundreds of millions around the world and the fees must run into the many millions.

No one knows for sure, except that they're in big business. "These horseback estimates are just that," a spokesman said. "No one knows, since the medium is always as individual and free-wheeling as its prime vehicle, the lone speaker."

It's possible there are be-

tween 600,000 and maybe a million paid lectures a year in this country. The New York Times once calculated in one week that there were at least 40,000 paid speaking engagements in New York City alone.

One reason for the growth in the lecture business is today's ease of transportation.

"In President Taft's day, a speaking engagement could be a very time-consuming affair," said Moore. "A New Yorker spoke in San Francisco after a grueling four-day train ride. Then he had to ride back.

"The airplane has revolutionized the platform. You

can speak anywhere in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii, and spend a maximum of 48 hours..."

Some of the speakers — government officials, TV performers, writers, businessmen and others — make more money for their lectures at conventions, business meetings, schools, civic groups and college campuses than they do from the work that made them wanted on the lecture circuit.

"Lecturing," says Moore, "has become the world's greatest moonlighting profession."